Management Concerning Collaboration with Social Resources in the Community to Support Students with Health Impairment -Approaches and Issues-

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1. Prologue

By proclaiming an amendment to the Special Education Promotion Law in March 24th, 2005, Korea established the foundation for supporting the educational rights of students with health impairment. In this amendment, health impairment was added to the disability classification to enable students with chronic health impairment to receive special education, with already existing students with special needs. This act was to follow the global trend of expanding the general understanding and classification of disabilities.

The purpose of the education for students with health impairment are: first, to guarantee “the right to learn” of students with health impairment by providing educational opportunities; second, to support the students to fit into school environment by providing individualized learning plans, and psychological and emotional supports; third, to improve therapeutic effect of education by supporting students to gain hope and courage through providing various services.

To support students with health impairments, much-needed services such as supporting them to return to school, providing in-school services and video instructions, and operating hospital school should be provided. However, there are still a few areas needing improvement. For example, stable system of support is not fully established yet, and operations of services need much improvement. The most important part of the support system is collaboration and cooperation of the organizations such as hospital, school, hospital school, department of education, and specific health impairment related organizations. Also, collaboration and cooperation among professionals such as general teacher, special teacher, doctor, nurse, social worker, educational administrator, and volunteers are important as well. Collaboration and cooperation is the most important part of providing services to students with health impairment.

2. Educational Support for Students with Health Impairment

(1) Health Impairment Defined

Health impairment was added to the Special Education Promotion Law in 2005 enabling students with health impairment to receive special education. Before the amendment was enacted, some students with health impairment received education by attending schools for students with physical disabilities. The definition of health impairment include a person needing continual educational
support to carry out school functions and learning activities, because of chronic impairment such as heart impairment, kidney impairment, and liver impairment that require more than 3 months of long-term hospitalization or regular visit to hospital. This definition focuses on the results of certain health impairment which means not focusing on classification of the impairment, rather than the existence of certain health impairment which means focusing on the classification of the impairment.

(2) Current Data on Students with Health Impairment

Based on the data collected in April 2007, 1,142 students were diagnosed having health impairment in the whole country. The low numbers suggest that there might be a reluctance to be diagnosed with health impairment, or lack of understand on health impairment in general.

(Table 1. Students with Health Impairment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Class</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Class</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) Reasons for Applying for Health Impairment

1) Long-term or frequent absence that might result in repeating the year
   - Difficulties in attending school because of treatment
   - Difficulties in repeating the year and not advancing with the same-age group
2) Difficulties in carrying out learning activities
   - Exhaustion from treatment sessions
   - Deterioration of physical functions
   - Negative effects from medication (loosing hair, or changes in weight)
   - Difficulties in studying because of aftereffect of treatments
   - Declining of concentration and memory, and speech impairment
3) Difficulties in fitting into school life
   - Lack of self-determination because of limited participation or exclusion in school activities
   - Emotional issues such as a feeling of isolation, apprehension, or depression
   - Disadvantages from being overprotected by teachers
   - Wrong impressions regarding illness (for example: worry about contamination)
4) Difficulties of family members
   - Worries and stresses from thinking about the student’s future
   - Financial difficulties because of educational expenses, and treatment cost
   - Stress from giving up personal life of parents
(4) Education Support Strategies for Students with Health Impairment

1) Hospital School: hospital school is a type of an extended school placed in hospital for students, who have not been able to receive school education because of long-term hospitalization or regular hospital visits.
   - Current hospital school is usually operated by one teacher forming an extended school. However, because students from various schools and grade levels study there, it is usually called as hospital school.
   - The purpose of operating hospital school is to improve treatment effects by sustaining student's continual learning and relationship with peers, and balancing psychological and emotional aspects of students who require long-term treatment.

2) Supporting returning to school: providing services to students who are returning back to school.

3) Supporting in school: providing services to students with health impairment who returned to school

4) Supporting students with health impairment who is required to regularly visit hospital or long-term care: providing education through communication technology such as on-line Internet visual instruction.

(5) The Educational Support System for Students with Health Impairment

1) The education support system to support the right to learn of students with health impairment
Chart 1. the Educational Support System for Students with Health Impairment

2) An educational support model focusing on hospital school for students with health impairment

Chart 2. An Educational Support Model Focusing on Hospital School for Students with Health Impairment

Source: Kim (2006), Educational Support Strategies for Students with Health Impairment and Introducing Establishing and Operating Hospital School
2. Cooperative Approaches to Students with Health Impairment

(1) Operating Disability Awareness Program

For school-aged children, school is the most important environment that can help them to grow and develop. The experiences they gain from school are the most meaningful ones in the lives of children (Davis, 1989). Because of long chronic illness, students with health impairment experience frequent absences for treatments and side effects (such as difficulties in studying, weight gain, or losing hair), which lead to negative reactions from peers and/or teachers. Because of this, students with health impairment can develop emotional problems which can be a serious issue by itself.

By letting others know correct information about health impairment, teachers can prevent students with health impairment becoming targets of excessive curiosity or bullies. The awareness program can lead students with health impairment to build close friendship with peers.

In 2006, an awareness program for health impairment was developed, and in 2007, all municipal and provincial department of education added it to their homepages, so that general teachers can easily access it. However, it is necessary to develop multiple programs to effectively target different age groups and levels of general students.

Individual student with health impairment should also receive training on a self-awareness program and a returning to school program, so that the students can fit into school life well. These programs can also provide teachers and peers right information regarding illness, and how to tackle emergency situations. Students with health impairment can also learn about their illness, and how to interact with reactions from people around him.

(2) Cooperation through Communication among Professionals

Teachers are as important as peers in helping students with health impairment to experience successful school life. However teachers’ low expectation and too much leniency toward students’ classroom attitude, learning activities including homework, and school activity participation can cause problems (Jin, 2000). Support needs related to health issues for students with health impairment and teachers must be clearly stated. Guidelines for support can promote and encourage communication between education and health professionals. Students with health impairment can receive the most appropriate educational support, when hospital and school have close collaborative relationship (Mukherjee et al., 2002). Medical teams should provide parents and teachers clear information on a student’s physical condition in order to help him/her to get back to school. With clear information on illness, teachers should strive to provide appropriate education that meets the student’s physical, emotional, and intellectual level (Norris & Colss, 1999).

After the student return to school, health management services for the student should be provided continually (Park, 2004; Park, 2005; Orelove & Sobsey, 1996). To do so, communication between school, physicians, and health professional should continue. Also, a guideline for the environmental elements that might cause health impairment and how to deal with them should be included in the retraining curriculum for teachers.
(3) Leadership of School Administrator

Thies and McAllister argued through “the Health and Educational Leadership” that, in order for children with chronic illness to have successful school life, school administrator, especially principal, should have strong leadership. Also, teachers should be support well, and communication between school and medical teams should increase (2001).

3. Future Tasks and Alternatives

(1) Promoting Awareness and Understanding
1) Create and operate hospital school Internet homepage around the country
   - By connecting hospital schools around the country, individuals that are involved in hospital schools including hospital officials, officials from department of education, special teacher, general teacher, volunteers, students with health impairment, and parents can share information, study materials, and related materials, and solve problems.
2) Develop and promote variety of disability awareness programs

(2) Processes in Administration
1) Administrative orders for accepting hospital school attendance record. There has been a request to modify currently obligatory attendance days from 2/3 to 1/2 of school days.
2) Fair processing of the Learning Achievement Assessment for students with health impairment.
3) Unifying document forms related to hospital school, and process.
4) Difficulties in selecting students with special needs because of general non-categorical approach.
   - Clear guidelines for determining special education recipients are needed to clarify whether a simple patient, a child with psychological impairment, or a victim of auto accident who is suffering aftereffect can be qualified as a person who needs special education.

(3) Flexible Collaboration to Support Students with Health Impairment
1) Exchanging information
   - Hold periodical workshop for hospital school
     By holing periodic workshops, people can share information on education for students with health impairment with special teacher, social worker, nurse, physician, hospital school official, general teacher working with students with health impairment, and parents.
   - Student's original school should provide curriculum resources to hospital school, and hospital school should provide information on student's conditions and illness to the original school.
   - Communication structures to enable adjusting overlapping schedules between treatment sessions and hospital school classes are needed, so that treatment and education can be applied simultaneously.
   - A system of sharing documents between teachers, physicians, nurses, social workers, and hospital officials is needed. Information can be shared through message book, letters, SMS, and so on.
2) Strengthening and Promoting Position of Hospital School within Hospital
   - Location of hospital school within hospital: should be located in a comfortable area. It should be
easy to access and quiet, and close to nurses.
   - Hospital school should be included in the organizational chart of the hospital.
   - Promote participation of hospital staff by assigning a pediatric doctor to an honorary hospital
school principal.

3) Operating Curriculum
   ① Although students with health impairment can receive special education based on the Special
Education Promotion Law, and as a result, special teachers are placed in hospital school, it is
necessary to place general teachers (elementary or middle school teachers) in hospital school,
and operate it cooperatively.
   ② Find ways to use retired teachers as volunteers to operate curriculum for middle school students.
Currently, hospital school is focused on elementary curriculum.
   ③ Many hospital schools use volunteers. It is necessary to manage and instruct volunteers through
trainings such as orientation.

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<Questions and Answers after Country Report>

Q.1
There might be issues around collaboration and exchange between medical staff and teachers. What strategies do you use to enhance collaboration?
A.1-1
First of all, it is important for related professionals to have face to face meeting regularly.
A.1-2
In this regular meeting, there must be a leader who can take a initiative. Unfortunately, in Korea, there are not so many leaders who can play this important role. At the present time, special education teachers in hospital schools often play a role of coordinator.
A.1-3
At present, we frequently use so called SMS, a system of exchange of letters utilizing cell phone network in order to communicate with others.
A.1-4
Another strategy; each one has a homepage, so we'd like to link these to get together.

Q.2
I am interested in the utilization of retired teachers that you mentioned in your presentation. What are some useful strategies?
A.2
We are still in planning stage.

<Comments>
According to the data, 5 countries have educational programs in hospitals for children with health impairments. It should be expanded. Use of cyber education has a great potential.